



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
3040 BIDDLE ROAD
MEDFORD, OREGON 97504

DECISION RECORD
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Galice Access Road Slide Project
(EA # OR117-04-01)

I. DECISION

The decision is to establish the Peavine/Serpentine Springs roads as the primary route between Galice and Soldier Saddle. This route will be upgraded as proposed in Alternative 3. If sufficient funds are available, the Galice Access road will also be minimally cleared to reopen it for at least short term seasonal use.

The proposed road work will be implemented in stages, as funding is available. The stages will be sequenced as follows:

1. Widen and surface the Serpentine Springs road. Reduce vegetation along the Peavine Road to improve vehicle sight distance and thus safety. As this work occurs, the Hansen Saddle and Chrome ridge roads will provide detour routes.
2. The slide at MP 4.6 of the Galice Access Road will be cleared only to the extent necessary to reopen the road. A minimum amount of slide material will be excavated from the road (approximately 5,000 cubic yards) and used to raise the road bed approximately five feet. A rock fall safety ditch, approximately eight feet wide, will be constructed to prevent rocks and slide material from reaching the road's running surface. The slope regrading proposed in Alternative 2 will not be implemented. It must be recognized that while the slide will be cleared and the road opened at this time it may be maintainable in the short term only.
3. The Hansen Saddle road will be surfaced with crushed aggregate and the Chrome Ridge road will be widened (EA p. 6). Some of the crushed rock surfacing work is currently being done or will be done by the Forest Service as a part of their road maintenance program.
4. The chip sealing and culvert replacement on the Peavine Road will be implemented as proposed in Alternative 3.
5. The proposed work at other sites on the Galice Access road will be implemented as

proposed in Alternative 2.

Implementation of this decision will include all project design features described in the EA.

Keeping the Galice Access road opened over the long term and clearing rock slides, as would be necessary to do this, is not guaranteed. Rock slides are expected to continue at the slide site due to geologic conditions. Periodic cleaning of the rock fall ditch may occur in the future depending upon the required scope of work. In the event of future slides that close the road, they will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if removal is reasonable and cost-effective.

Temporary road closures will be required during project activities. The Taylor Creek and Chrome Ridge roads will be available as alternative routes during these periods.

It is my decision that the Galice Access road will be closed during the winter rain / snow period when the potential for additional rock slides is greatest. Gates on the Galice Access Road will be installed for this purpose.

Proposed mitigation measure #1 (EA p. 18) is accepted and will be adopted in part only. As proposed, the 34-8-28.1 road will be gated and closed at its junction with road 34-9-1.2 to reduce big game disturbance and potential poaching.

It is my decision that the **proposed monitoring** (EA p. 12) will be implemented in a manner that allows some measurement of slope instability on, primarily, an annual basis that may facilitate determining if the road should be completely closed. It is not the purpose of this monitoring to provide a basis for daily or hourly assessment of slope stability and thus short term road user safety or road closure.

The project design feature (PDF) described in the EA (p. 7) regarding Port-Orford Cedar management is amended as follows:

- All project operations will be confined to the dry season.
- In the advent of a summer rain which produces puddles on the road, water running in the ditch line, and increased soil moisture, work on the 34-8-36 road and the infected portion of road 35-9-1.4 will be stopped until conditions dry out.
- Clorox Bleach (1 gal / 1,000 gals water) will be used when vehicles and equipment are washed for the purpose of controlling *Phytophthora lateralis* (PL) spore transport.
- All vehicles and heavy equipment will be power washed prior to entering the project area to control PL.
- Vehicles and heavy equipment used in completing the work on the Galice Access Road (34-8-36) will be power washed to control PL spread as they leave this road and before entering other portions of the project area.
- Water used in washing vehicles / equipment or in dust abatement or road renovation / maintenance will be obtained from BLM approved uninfested (PL) sources.
- While working on the Galice Access Road portion of the project, vehicles and equipment will not be permitted to move back and forth or into and out of other portions of the project area. All work on the slide will be started and finished as a discrete unit;

all work on the other Galice Access road locations will be started and finished as a single unit.

- Road work on 35-9-1.4 will be done within the infested portion first. After this is completed vehicles will be power washed prior to moving to other portions of the road.
- Two vehicle / equipment wash stations will be located as follows:
 - (1) At the junction of the Galice Access Road (34-8-36) and the Hansen Saddle Road (35-9-1.4);
 - (2) On the Galice Access Road in the east half of Section 4 at approximately MP4.0.

II. RATIONALE

Alternative 1 (no action) is rejected because it will not result in providing a good route between Galice and Soldier Camp suitable for the high levels of recreational and forest management related traffic.

Alternatives 2 and 2a are not selected as the preferred solution even though the Galice Access road provides a slightly shorter route and was the route preferred in the public comments received regarding this project. I have not chosen to pursue the full slide removal and slope stabilization objectives of Alternative 2 because of the on-going geologic instability at the slide's location. The geo-technical assessment of the slide site indicates that extensive and continued slope instability is to be expected at this site. Thus even though the Galice Access Road has been open and used for many years, the slope instabilities and road maintenance costs have been a point of concern to the BLM for many years. Massive rock slides such as occurred in February 2002 and during the winter of 2002-03 that block and close the road create a continuing safety hazard to road users. Road clearing and maintenance has required considerable cost and time to repair. The need to address the problem with a more viable and cost effective long term solution and route leads me to reject Alternative 2 as the best solution.

I have selected Alternative 3 as the best approach to meeting the purpose and need because improving the Peavine/Serpentine Springs route (Alternative 3) will provide the best long term, most reliable, and most cost effective route between Galice and Soldier Saddle. I recognize that its slightly longer route (approximately four miles) and slower travel time (less than 10 minutes) may result in higher costs for road users (e.g., commercial shuttle drivers, log truck traffic) but I believe that the upgraded (widening, improved sight distance and chip seal surfacing) route will be in the public's best interest in the long term. Using this as the primary route will also contribute to reducing the potential for spread of Port-Orford Cedar root disease as, unlike the Galice Access Road; it does not pass through areas of Port-Orford Cedar.

I did not select Alternative 4 because it does not accomplish the purpose and need in the best and most cost effective manner. It will not best provide for user safety nor would it establish a reliable, long term route between Galice and Soldier Camp.

While I have made the decision to focus on Alternative 3 as the best solution, I have decided that, if money is available to do so, clearing of the rock slide on the Galice Access Road will

occur. I have decided to do this because the public comments that I received regarding the proposed project indicated a preference for the continued use of the Galice Access Road. All users of the Galice Access Road must recognize that this may provide a useable route for only a very short period of time or it may result in only an intermittent option for use now and in the future. The road may be closed at any time in the future if slides occur or if continual maintenance costs are prohibitive. The road will be closed during the wet winter and spring season due to safety concerns.

My decision incorporates the variety of project design features that will minimize potential short and long term adverse environmental impacts resulting from the project. While making the Peavine – Serpentine Springs road the primary route may result in adverse impacts on the resident elk herd (harassment, disturbance, poaching), I accept this potential and anticipate that it will be minimized by the proposed tributary road gating (EA p. 18). Implementation of the project design features will also effectively serve to reduce the potential spread of Port-Orford Cedar root disease due to the construction work.

The additional *Phytophthora lateralis* (PL) control measures to be implemented will serve to further reduce the risk of spore transfer and disease spread to other areas. These additional measures have been identified through the use of the risk assessment key that is a part of the May 2004 Record of Decision for the Management of Port-Orford Cedar on BLM lands in southwest Oregon. The work sequencing identified in the decision places a higher priority on the Galice Access road slide removal than the risk assessment recommended. The risk assessment recommended that this portion of the project be completed last due to the existing level of PL infection / infestation. However, the requirement that equipment be washed after the work on the Galice Access road section is completed and the requirement that each “unit” (road) be completed before commencing on the next will result in a comparably low level of risk.

Public Comments. During scoping and the formal public comment period, ten comments were received. The majority of the comments expressed a preference for either a short or long term repair of the slide. The decision outlined above will provide a reliable, cost-effective long term route *and* repair the slide in the short term in response to public preference.

This decision is consistent with the *Medford District Resource Management Plan* (1995), the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (1994), the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (2001), the *Record of Decision Amending Resource Management Plans for Seven Bureau of Land Management Districts and Land and Resource Management Plans for Nineteen National Forests Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl: Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy* (2004); the *Record of Decision to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Document within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. (2004), and the *Record of Decision (ROD) and Resource Management Plan Amendment for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts* (May 2004).

Planning and biological surveys for this project occurred prior to the March 2004 ROD which moved the management of the Northwest Forest Plan's Survey and Manage species into the BLM's special status species program. The ROD (p. 8) permits a project to be completed under the S&M standards and guidelines if planning began prior to that date. The current project is designed in accordance with the S&M standards and guidelines and these species will be managed as S&M species throughout this project.

This decision is also consistent with the Endangered Species Act; the Native American Religious Freedom Act; other cultural resource management laws and regulations; Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice; and Executive Order 13212 regarding potential adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.

My decision regarding this project will advance the Bureau of Land Management's Strategic Plan for FY2000-2005, specifically mission goals 1.1 (provide opportunities for environmentally responsible recreation), 1.2 (provide opportunities of environmentally responsible commercial activities) and 1.4 (reduce threats to public health, safety and property).

III. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on information contained in the EA, the project's record, and on comments received from the public regarding the project, it is my determination that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. During scoping and the public comment period, those who commented shared their preferences for one alternative over another but did not reveal any new resource information or impacts that would indicate a need for further analysis. This project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This conclusion is also based on a consideration of both the context and intensity of the identified impacts of the selected action(s) (40 CFR § 1508.27). **Context** refers to analysis of environmental consequences at various social or geographic scales. For this project, impacts were assessed at the site-specific and the larger watershed scales. The analysis also considered the social context and the importance having a safe and cost effective route between Galice and Soldier Camp and thus to the coast. **Intensity** refers to the severity of impacts. Conclusions regarding intensity are supported by the following findings:

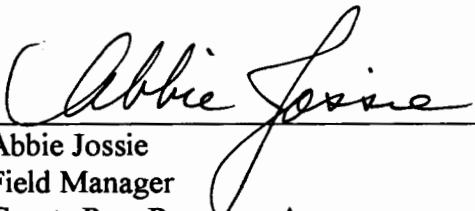
1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effect will be beneficial. Both adverse and beneficial impacts will result from the project. Both have been considered in concluding that there will be no adverse environmental impacts at the 5th field watershed scale and inconsequential impacts at the site-specific level. Soil erosion, sedimentation, noxious weed dispersal, and disturbance to the Peavine elk herd were identified as potential areas of greatest adverse impact but no substantive impacts to them have been identified.

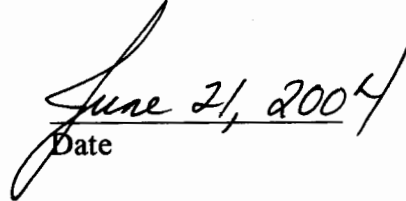
- 2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.* No direct adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified. The Galice Access road is subject to considerable landslide risk and user safety is a concern over the long term. The Peavine - Serpentine Springs route will be safer and less susceptible to large landslides.
- 3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.* The project will not impact wild and scenic rivers, wetlands, ecologically critical areas or cultural or historical features.
- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.* There is no indication of any highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment.
- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* There is no indication that the effects on the human environment are highly uncertain and/or involve unique or unknown risks.
- 6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* The action is not precedent setting. Road repair/upgrade is a typical activity.
- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* There is no indication that the actions will appreciably contribute to any cumulative impacts at the site-specific or watershed scales.
- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Historic Register listed or eligible to be listed sites or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.* There is no indication that the action will cause loss or destruction of any scientific, cultural, or historical resources (no sites were found in the project area).
- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect ESA listed species or critical habitat.* The project area is within spotted owl critical habitat unit #OR-65. Substantive adverse impacts are not expected, however. No spotted owl habitat will be removed. Project design features regarding blasting are expected to reduce the potential for disturbance to owls. The slide is approximately 3.0 miles upstream from coho presence and 2.0 miles upstream from coho critical habitat in North Fork Galice Creek. Peavine and Serpentine Springs roads are 4-5 miles from coho or their habitat. Due to the distance from project activities to where coho are known to occur or to critical habitat, the project will not affect coho or coho critical habitat.
- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State or local law or requirements for the protection of the environment.* There are no indications that the action will violate any environmental protection law or requirement.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

This decision is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Administrative recourse is available in accordance with BLM regulation and must follow the procedures and requirements described in 43 CFR § 5003, Administrative Remedies.

In accordance with BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR § 5003.2 (a&c), the effective date of the decision will be the date of publication of the Notice of Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. Publication of this notice will establish the date initiating the protest period provided for in accordance with 43 CFR § 5003.3. Any contest of this decision should state specifically what portion or element of the decision is being protested and cite the applicable CFR regulations.


Abbie Jossie
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Grants Pass Resource Area
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Date